

USDA Farm to School Team Monthly Report July & August 2010

Site Visits:

In May and June of 2010, the USDA Farm to School Team visited six of the nine areas selected by the Team, which represented nine of the fifteen school districts selected. During July and August, the USDA Farm to School Team has been consolidating the observations, challenges and best practices learned during these first site visits. The six school districts in the remaining three areas will be visited in the month of September, prior to the end of Fiscal Year 2010. These districts include:

- Riverside Unified School District, Riverside, CA
- Ventura Unified School District, Ventura, CA
- Morrison Public Schools, Morrison, OK
- Union Public Schools, Tulsa, OK
- Chilton Public Schools, Chilton, WI
- Hilbert School District, Hilbert, WI

The Team will continue to meet with school district administrators, local farmers, local and state authorities, students, teachers, parents, and community partners to analyze and assess variables that support or deter farm-to-school activities, both from the school and farmer perspective. The information gathered during these site visits will be used to develop and/or reissue appropriate resource materials, guidance, and technical assistance for both schools and farmers. A full summary of observations, challenges and best practices will be shared on the Farm to School Website.

Policy Development/Technical Assistance:

- Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) agency is currently developing the final rule on *Geographic Preference Option for Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs*, which is scheduled to be issued later this year.
- Provided comments to the Economic Research Service (ERS) regarding a cooperative agreement with the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute of Occidental College to conduct a Farm to School Census Survey on all 50 States.
- Provided comments to the National Agricultural Library on a draft Farm to School bibliography.
- Provided responses to two Congressional inquiries regarding USDA's farm to school efforts.
- Continued dialog with the National Farm to School Network to determine related farm to school research needs.
- Provided comments to the US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs "Healthy Schools-Native Eats School Survey".
- On August 25, 2010, the Farm to School Resource webpage (http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/resource_supplement.htm) was updated to include links to Team Nutrition's *Chefs Move to Schools* and the National Agricultural Library's farm to school and school gardens resources, farm to school bulletin board resources, and chef resources.
- On August 26, 2010, the Farm to School Available USDA Grants webpage was updated to include the new *People's Garden School Pilot Program* (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/Supporting.htm>).
- Team members are editing additional farm to school webpages that will focus on the operation and support of farm to school activities. The webpages will include information on working with

farmers and schools, distribution models, impacts of farm to school, food safety, lessons learned and best practices, grants that support farm to school activities, school and community resources, and supporting activities (e.g., school gardens).

Meetings/Conferences/Presentations:

- On July 1, 2010, Team members met with representatives from USDA's Rural Development (RD) Agency and the US Department of the Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs.
- On July 6, 2010, Team members participated in the CDC's National Council of Fruit & Vegetable Nutrition Coordinators' webinar. Staff from the Agricultural Marketing Service spoke on the concept of developing "Regional Food Hubs".
- On July 11 – 14, 2010, staff from the Child Nutrition Division presented several topics at the School Nutrition's Annual National Conference, in Dallas TX, including procurement requirements and an overview of the Farm to School Team.
- On July 16, 2010, Team members met with Deputy Secretary Merrigan and several representatives of One Tray to provide an update on the Farm to School Team's activities and discuss areas of interest.
- On July 20, 2010, Team members met with representatives of the National Farm to School Network, School Food FOCUS and National Good Food Network to clarify the pilot project ideas these organizations are considering to propose to USDA to support farm to school.
- On July 23, 2010, Team members met with the Economic Research Service (ERS) Agency to discuss ERS's Farm to School Census Survey.
- On August 4, 2010, Team members met with Deputy Under Secretary Wright to discuss farm to school data collection needs.
- On August 19, 2010, Team members met with Oregon's Department of Agriculture to discuss research needs.
- On August 24, 2010, Team lead and WRO Regional Administrator provided overview of farm to school activities happening across the country to the Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food Taskforce.
- Members of the Farm to School Team continue to meet regularly with the National Farm to School Network and other Farm to School stakeholders to discuss future collaborations on Farm to School activities.
- Regular meetings/conference calls are scheduled with core and resource team members.

Upcoming Events (Fourth Quarter FY2010):

1. Final site visits for the Farm to School Team (September 2010)